BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08655 620 4

7658
.126

Harvard Business Branch

No. 7658.126

GIVEN BY
Lawrence Bond

Incomplete.
Should have 42 pp. + map

REPORT

ON THE

BRUNSWICK

CANAL AND RAIL ROAD.

* 7658.126

GLYNN COUNTY, GEORGIA.

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING THE

CHARTER AND COMMISSIONERS REPORT.

BY LOAMMI BALDWIN, ESQ.
CIVIL ENGINEER.

Boston:
DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, PRINTERS,
Nos. 10 and 12 Exchange Street.

1836.

Laurence Bond
Aug. 10, 1897.

REPORT.

* N658.126

CHARLESTOWN, Mass., June 6, 1836.

SIR:—Having been requested by the Brunswick Canal and Railroad Company to examine and survey a route for a canal from the Altamaha River to Brunswick Harbour, in Georgia, which was incorporated by an act of the Legislature, passed Dec. 20, 1834, I have executed that trust, and present the following Report, with a Plan, showing the route I recommend for their adoption.

The Altamaha river is navigable from Darien 200 miles, to the forks of the Ocmulgee and Oconee, and up the Ocmulgee, the west branch, 300 miles, to Macon, and on the east branch, Oconee, 200 miles to Milledgeville, the capital of the state. Steamboats are used with wheels at the sides, and take, on each side, a boat loaded with five or six hundred bales of cotton down to Darien from Macon and Milledgeville and the intermediate points of the river. The ascending freight by the same means is considered more than that descending. The amount of cotton is increasing, and during the past year there were about 130,000 bales brought to Darien.

From Darien, the Altamaha is also navigable 12 miles to Doby Island for ships and schooners drawing 11 feet, at common high water in ordinary tides. At Doby Island, ships may come drawing 14 feet at common high water. Over the bar at Doby Inlet is 16 or 17 feet at high water, but an intermediate bar or spit of sand prevents vessels drawing more than 14 feet at high water, passing to the island.

The country bordering on the Altamaha, Ocmulgee, and Oconee, and their tributaries, for an extent at least of 80 miles wide, and 150 miles in length, in the direction of the rivers, abounds with pine, cypress, and white oak, which is now almost useless for want of a good harbor at Darien. The tributaries, the great Ohcopee, and the little

Ocmulgee, have some saw mills, from which sawed lumber of various kinds, and logs, are rafted to Darien for country use, but none, or very little for foreign markets. The Little Satilla, the Great Satilla, the St. Mary's, and the St. John's rivers, are accessible from the harbor of Brunswick, by the inland navigation. The St. John's is the outlet of a large portion of East and Middle Florida, and the St. Mary's is navigable to Colerain for steamboats drawing 10 feet water. The Great Satilla is navigable to the head of tide, above one hundred miles from St. Andrews' sound, for vessels drawing 10 or 12 feet, at all seasons of the year. This is one of the best streams in the state for the lumber trade, having an almost inexhaustable quantity of pine timber in the country through which it flows. The Little Satilla is an arm of the sea, and navigable to its head, a distance of about 35 miles from St. Andrews' sound. These rivers will send to Brunswick market cotton, rice, and lumber in great quantities.

From Darien to Charleston and Savannah, cotton, &c., is sent by steamboats, schooners and sloops inland, and return goods for the interior, to Darien, by the same conveyance. This inland navigation is afforded by the passages between the islands and the main land, though sloops and schooners occasionally pass outside the islands, but the common route for all navigation is inland.

The river Chattahoochee is navigable for steam boats to Columbus in Georgia, from Appalachicola Bay, but not for vessels over 11 feet, at the mouth. This river passes through Florida and in that province called the Appalachicola, and is the boundary between Alabama and Georgia, for the distance of 30 miles above Columbus and for 120 down to the bounds of Florida. A steamboat navigation is also afforded on its principal tributary, the Flint river, to Pinderton, in Georgia, at the end of Spaulding's Rail-road communication with the big bend of the Ocmulgee. The town of Appalachicola has been found unhealthy, and a Rail-road has been opened from Wimico Lake to St. Joseph's Bay, where there is 20 feet of water, and much more healthy.

Altamaha river is the medium of communication for an immense tract of the interior of Georgia with Darien, which is situated on the left bank about 12 or 13 miles from the sea, but, unfortunately, has no harbor for foreign shipping. All the produce of the country has

now to be sent to Savannah or Charleston, and return goods received from the same places by steam boats and small coasting vessels. No foreign trade, from this circumstance, can be carried on. It is a great state, with abundant and increasing productions, without a good port. It is to connect the immense traffic of the Altamaha with a convenient and capacious harbor for the most extensive foreign shipping, that the Brunswick Canal in Georgia has been contemplated.

Brunswick Harbour, Georgia.

St Simons Light is on St. Simons Island, at the south end, behind which, at a little distance, the island is one or one and an half mile wide. From the east side, a wide shoal or sand-bar extends about five miles in an east south-east direction, gradually diminishing in width to a point, forming what is called the north breaker. A similar bar extends from Jekyl Island, opposite to St. Simons, wide at the island, but gradually lessening in width as far as the north breaker, and terminating at a point called the south breaker. Between these two shoals and the two islands is the channel, and between the two breakers is the bar about a mile long and half a mile across it. On Saturday the 13th of February, I went with Edmund M. Blunt, an experienced pilot, Capt. John Anderson, of Brunswick, a good navigator, &c., in Capt. Morgan's sloop, to examine the bar, and found at low water three fathoms over the bar. All on board agreed that there was that depth at low water, and that the tide was six feet at ordinary tides, so that at common high water there was 24 feet over the bar.

If ships, coming in when six or seven miles from the light house, make the light bear W. N.W. they can enter. Immediately on passing the bar, the channel gradually widens and deepens to the light, so that the largest vessels and frigates may pass into St. Simons sound above the Light, and on taking a southerly direction they may pass up Turtle river, into the outer harbor of Brunswick, or continue up Turtle river ten or fifteen miles where it is a mile or a mile and a half wide, having from 4 to 6 or 8 fathoms at low water. This extensive sheet of salt water is rather an arm of the sea than a river, the tide flows up to the mouth of a small river, which soon diminishes to a creek, has no navigation and furnishes no produce. It is therefore an

extensive harbour where there is ample room for the whole navy, with very eligible situations for a naval establishment, but has no river opening into the interior, and hence no ships are ever seen in these waters.

Brunswick is situated on the east bank of an arm or branch of Turtle river, separated from the main river by a marsh island about a mile long and a mile wide. This branch is about a quarter or half a mile wide, with a depth of water sufficient for the largest merchant vessels at all times, except a shallow place or bar between the lower end of the island, and Dennis' Folly, at the lower end of the town. This bar is one mile long and forms the separation between the inner and outer harbour. The town was laid out with streets at right angles, by direction of the British parliament, about a century ago.

Capt. Stockton and Mr. Sherburne were appointed by the Navy Department in 1826, to survey and examine the bar at St. Simons and the harbour of Brunswick. Their soundings over the bar and up the river for a distance of 10 or 12 miles are accurate and numerous, giving over the bar from 16 to 18 feet depth at low water. The report and plans are in the office of the Navy Department. His report and extensive soundings are very conclusive as to the depth of water above St. Simons bar and in the arm of Turtle river, (on which the town of Brunswick is situated,) and on the bar. But the most definite information, and I believe, from personal experience, perfectly correct, is contained in the Report of Messrs. Polhill, Lawson and Fort, made on the 17th of July, 1833, to the Senate and House of Representatives of Georgia, pursuant to their appointment; by a resolve of the Legislature, Dec. 17, 1832, "to go and examine the commercial advantages of the port of Brunswick, and the rail-road avenue to the Altamaha, and report thereon, upon oath, whether or not it would be advisable for the state to render any aid in opening Brunswick to the interior."

The valuable report of the commissioners is carefully made and most satisfactory on all points relative to the object of their mission, and especially in regard to the harbour of Brunswick. The following extract shows their opinion upon this point. "When you approach within half a mile of the town, there is a small salt marsh island which divides the river into the northern and eastern branches, the main channel running southward of this island. Between Brandy-point on this

island, and Dennis' Folly, on the Brunswick shore, there is an inner bar, upon which there is about 12 feet at low water, and as the tide rises ten feet, it gives the same depth of water that we find on the outer bar, with this advantage, that the bottom being soft mud creates no damage to ships, and may be very easily deepened if it were necessary. But no such necessity exists, as any ship that crosses the outer bar can run over this at high water, and find the best anchorage near the bluff along the whole extent of the town, in from 20 to 40 feet water at the lowest time of tide. This we ascertained from careful soundings at low water, and after having finished the soundings for ourselves, ascertained that Stockton's report and diagram confirmed on our survey."

Brunswick is healthy, surrounded as it is on the west, south and east by the ocean. It is situated on a plain, generally eight or ten feet above high water, and very convenient for wharves. On the south part of the town, this point terminates in an extensive salt marsh, which extends to St. Simons sound. St. Simons light is eight miles from town, and the bar thirteen miles. Behind the town, and within the distance of half a mile, are several small holes or ponds, which contain shallow water, which may be drained at very small expense. There is no other stream or resting place for fresh water within many miles. These swamps, as they are called, are low places in the sandy plains, where water in rains collect, and in time have given rise to the growth of trees, shrubs and plants of an aquatic kind, thick and matted together, so that it is very difficult to pass between them; but the water is often dried up in the summer, and as they are not boggy, the foundation is sand, clay or hard earth, so that they are passable in any direction when the water is dried up and the bushes are cleared.

Upon the healthinesss of the place, the State Commissioners are also decided. "In regard to health, we consider Brunswick superior to any sea port on the southern coast. It is a high and dry bluff, with the total absence of lagoones, swamps of stagnant fresh water, and rice fields, and with a broad sheet of clear ocean water, almost as salt as the sea, and its pure sea breeze setting in regularly from the ocean, make it not only a delightful situation in summer, as we experienced it to be, but give the strongest assurance of the health and comfort of seamen and navigators, and of the inhabitants of the town.

We found the wells of water as good as could be expected in so low a latitude. Though not very cool, we believe it to be pure, and that which we found in town was better than the wells in the immediate vicinity. The extensive marshes are overflowed at every tide with pure salt water, and are not considered at all injurious to health. The sea breeze sweeps delightfully over them, and we found some of the most healthy families in the vincinity living immediately upon their edge."

From my examination and experience in February, 1836, I fully believe in the truth of the Commissioners' report, and from the absence of all natural causes of unhealthiness, and the cheap and easy removal, by draining, of the collection of fresh water within several miles of the town, Brunswick may become one of the most healthy and pleasant residences, in summer and winter, within the southern sea board of our country. If once the buildings become convenient, I believe it will become a resort for people from the northern States, in winter especially, for health or for pleasure.

The above account of the great extent and width of the Turtle river, after passing St. Simons sound, affords a complete land-locked anchorage ground for the largest merchant ships and any class of ships of war, as well as eligible and healthy sites for naval establishments. There appears to me no doubt, that Brunswick harbour will attract the attention of the navy, if the passage of the bar does not forbid. Upon this point, the Georgia Commissioners hold the following language in their report:

"The object of Congress in ordering the survey having been the establishment of a naval depot on Turtle river, it is to be presumed that the officer made his report with a view to the strict safety of our ships of war, and therefore preferred being rather under than over the depth of water. We draw this conclusion from the fact, that we found the soundings on the bar to be generally about eighteen feet, at as near low water as we could judge; our shallowest sounding was seventeen feet, but we found more water on the same tack. As we found Stockton's report very accurate in every respect, and as he had spent some time in the survey, we conclude that the water on the bar may be set down at from sixteen to seventeen feet at low water, and twenty-two or twenty-three at high water, striking a medium between his survey and our soundings. The pilots and coast-